

**Sant-Sipahi,
Scholar-'Shahid'
MANI SINGH
Paradigm of
Virtue and Valour**

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PREFACE

Guru Nanak Dev Mission has decided to publish some of the research papers as tracts, out of the research papers received by Dr. Ganda Singh Memorial Trust. Three of them were awarded I, II & III prize and the same have been published as tracts No. 417, 418 419; whereas some research papers were awarded consolation prize. The mission has decided to publish these papers also as tracts. This paper written by Prof. N.D. Ahuja on the life of Sant-Sipahi, Scholar-'Shahid' Mani Singh is being published as tract No. 422. Prof. N.D. Ahuja is well known for his writings on number of subjects and this was considered as a very good research paper and as such it is being published.

S. Narain Singh is now with his son in Bihar for some time, as such the correspondence address of the Mission now is as under :

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SANT-SIPAHI, SCHOLAR-'SHAHID' MANI SINGH PARADIGM OF VIRTUE AND VALOUR

History is witness that at typically critical and chaotic times, some unique leader or martyr did come up to save a community or area from a total canker and collapse. Some martyrs made bold to dam the damning flood of a threatening crisis with their own blood-kneaded bodies. One such example is that of Mani Singh—a real paradigm of spiritualism, intellectualism and heroism. Like a true *Yogi*, he suffered his own body to be cut into pieces to save his people from a dishonourable annihilation.

There is a basic difference between a valiant martyr and a hapless or mauled victim of tyranny. Martyrdom is a symbolic evidence (*shahadat*) that the martyr (*shahid*) himself voluntarily *preferred* to die than to forsake his honour, cherished principle or mission *even when he had the option*. A martyr's dripping blood is, hence, venerated as a sacred life-giver and cementer for the drooping community or the baffled nation. His death is, often, not mourned but is commemorated and even celebrated by the indebted revitaminised posterity.¹

A martyr dies for others and not just for a narrow personal purpose or individual interest. Mani Singh could save himself from the clutches of his tormentors but he became a self-willed flag-bearer for his people so that they may live with honour after his gracefully and inspiringly kissing DEATH.

It is a sad commentary that no specific and serious attempts were made to commemorate Mani Singh's martyrdom. No com-

meritable research has been done to publicise his contributions although he is acknowledged as a unifier of the Sikhs at a critical time, their needed timely guide and an authentic projector of the holy *Dasam Granth* and the canonical *Rehat Nama* as well as the first *Jathedar* or Head Priest of the 'Akal Takht'.²

It is quite intriguing that J.D. Cunningham, the notable writer and critic, did not even mention (like several other historiographers) the name of Mani Singh in his *History of the Sikhs* (may be for some expedient compulsions). An impressed Rabindra Nath Tagore did write a poem on martyred Taru Singh Poola an old companion of Guru Gobind Singh and Mani Singh (executed at Lahore in 1743 A.D.) but nothing about Mani Singh.³ Numerous accounts and memorials are available and fairs are also held to commemorate another contemporary martyr, Haqiqat Rai (b. 1724; executed, 1742 A.D.).⁴ Gokul Chand Narang, in his *Transformation of Sikhism*, simply presented Mani Singh as just an old pious person without highlighting his historic role in the factual and effective transformation of Sikhism into a reckonable political force or in re-organising the shattered, scattered and punctured Sikhs. Some small, sub-standard and unresearched monographs, generally in *Gurmukhi* script, did appear, from time to time, as untenable and limited hagiologies for classified folks only.^{4a} The present context particularly warrants an imperative peep into Mani Singh's life and role.

Mani Ram (later Mani Singh)'s father Kala Ram alias Kala Shah is said to be a petty peasant⁵ at village Kebowal or Kobewal in the Malwa (Patiala region).⁶ His whole family was devoted to the "Sikh Panth" and the Gurus. Kala Ram's father, Balu Ram, is believed to have sacrificed his life at the battle of Kartarpur (1634 A.D.) while fighting for the 6th Guru Hargohind (b. 1606; d. 1645?).⁷

Tender Mani Ram accompanied his father, in 1657 A.D., on a pilgrimage to Kiratpur⁸ to pay obeisance before the 7th Guru Har Rai (b. 1645; d. 1661).⁹ There he stayed on, for some time for more enlightenment and *sewa* (selfless service).¹⁰

The 9th Guru, Tegh Bahadur, returned in March, 1672,¹¹ to his self-founded Headquarter at Anandpur,¹² after his tour of Bihar, Bengal, Assam, etc. He had visited many places including Patna (where Guru Gobind was born in October, 1666 A.D.)¹³ Dhakka, Chittagong, etc. In 1673,¹⁴ his wife, Mata Gujri, also reached alongwith their 6 years old son.

Like many other zealous devotees, Kala Ram also visited Anandpur alongwith his 7 years (?)¹⁵ old kid, Mani Ram, at the eve Baisakhi, to be able to have a *darshan* of the Guru and his magnetic son. Gobind Rai and Mani Ram, then happened to be almost of the same age-group.¹⁶

During his short stay at Anandpur, Mani Ram was, perhaps, emotionally mesmerised by alchemising Gobind Rai. Both became mates. The co-relation lasted for life. For the next 33 pregnant years of a concentrated historic era, both sustained an unbreakable bond.

Temperamentally, Mani Singh tended extraordinarily towards spiritualism and educational pursuits right from his early age. He is said to have, soon, mastered various branches of knowledge.

Suddenly, a historic 'blast' occurred in November, 1675 A.D. in the form of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur alongwith his saintly compatriots—Dayal Das, Sati Das, Mati Das, etc. What followed is too well-known to need a repetition here. The 9 years old successor Guru, Gobind Rai, and his impassioned followers reshaped their strategies for a dynamic action.¹⁷ In this vortex Mani Singh is believed to have steadfastly stood by his Master and Mentor.

A *rangretta*, Jaita, successfully brought the revered head of Guru Tegh Bahadur to Anandpur for obsequies.¹⁸ The remaining corpse was cremated by Lakhi Rai at the site of present Gurdwara Rakab Ganj.¹⁹ This fearless Lakhi Rai is said to have already betrothed his own daughter, Seeto, to 10 year (?) old Mani Ram.²⁰ The co-martyred Dayal Das, Mati Das and Sati Das are

believed, by many, to be elder brothers of Mani.²¹ Later, Mani Singh's younger brothers, Matbi, Lehna and Sohan, are said to have given their lives at Bhangani, Guler and Nadaun respectively while fighting for Guru Gobind Singh.²² His six more brothers, seven sons and several grandsons are said to have sacrificed their lives in various battles fought by the dauntless Sikhs.²³ It is said that at the eve of his own execution, in June, 1738 (?),²⁴ at the age of 69 (or 91 ?),²⁵ he was accompanied by his two more captive sons who too were cut alongwith him.²⁶ If these stirring traditional accounts are true, it would be well high impossible to locate a family of such magnitudinous, steadfast, self-less and unique sacrifices.²⁷

Mani Singh remained, for long, a constant companion of his Guru He was also a conspicuous writer included in the galaxy of 52 picked-up litterateurs who stayed at Paonta (Nahan) with the 19-20 years old Guru (from 1685 to 1688).²⁸

Bhai Mani Singh philosophically scribed some laudable parts of Indian history.²⁹ He also dexterously edited, for general grasp and benefit, the preachings, tales and scripts of and about the Gurus alongwith his own judicious or explanatory connotation where appropriately needed.³⁰

Bhai Mani Singh was a captivating *Katha-Vachik* (narrator) also.³¹ His style was arresting. He was adept in stirring emotions and injecting a new spirit amongst his audience bulk of which comprised of martial Punjabi *Jats*.

It is believed that Guru Gobind Singh specially yoked Bhai Mani Singh's calibre and services while re-preparing his 3rd and final edition of the *Adi Granth*.³² Perhaps, during his stay at Paonta and for subsequently, Bhai Mani Singh himself scribed even some copies of the *Adi Granth*.³³ He also wrote some explicit annotations of selected compositions of Bhai Gurdas apart from those on the *Jup-ji*, *Asa di Var* and *Sidh Gosht*, etc.³⁴ His various projective works have been serving, for long, as "Towers of Light" and authentic guidelines in various complicated and knotty situations.³⁵

Bhai Mani Singh was a man of sword as well. He participated

with his Guru, in the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Anandpur.³⁶ He represented an amalgam of *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Shakti* (powers). His sharp sagacity, muscled body, unshakable faith and determination kneaded with piety and spiritualism were his assets. Forbearance, fortitude, discipline, physical, mental and moral strength, sense of discernment, profound concern for unity as well as concerted, coordinated and measured action pushed him shoulders above others as a leader of men after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur. He is said to have even resorted to sword to tame down or eliminate the recalcitrants in the interest of the much-needed coordination between the divided and warring *Bandai* Sikhs and the followers of the *Tat-Khalsa*.³⁷ Panthic unity became uncompromisable creed with him even though he had to give his own life in this effort.³⁸

In or about 1698 A.D. i.e. just some months before the creation of the *Khalsa*, 32-33 years old Guru Gobind Singh significantly appointed his co-aged constant companion and confederate Mani Ram, as his personal Advisor-in-Chief and *Diwan* in view of his credibility and for his recognised qualities of head and heart.³⁹ The youthful and innovative Guru had known him well for the last 24-25 years, in all respects, through close observation and personal experience.

It may be a million-dollar question as to why Mani Ram was not amongst the first *Panj-Pyaras* who had offered their lives at the call of the Guru. With deeper and searching peep into the whole drama of the Transformation of the Sikhs into 'Singhs' on the 1st of Baisakh, 1756 B S. i.e. April 13, 1699 (or 30th March ?)⁴⁰ it might transpire as if Mani Ram was busy in playing some special confidential and meaningful role behind the scenes as the Guru's most reliable assistant.⁴¹ Anyway, he too got baptised, on that very day, alongwith the Guru, his own five sons and a group of another 19 Sikhs, by the first honoured *Panj-Pyaras*.⁴² He was christened as 'Mani Singh' with almost whole of his family having become earliest *Amrit-dharis*.

After the last and the fiercest battle of Anandpur (1704 A D.)

Guru Gobind Singh, under the prevailing situations, left Anandpur alongwith his family and a number of unsailing followers. Mani Singh too accompanied him. After a deceitful surprise raid by the enemies, the party was torn asunder into three groups. The Guru plunged his horse into the flooded Sarsa rivulet, soon he reached Chamkaur alongwith his two elder sons, Ajit Singh (10½ years) and Zorawar Singh (9½ years), and just a few dare-devil companions. The second group, comprising his two younger kids, Jujhar Singh (8½ years) and Fateh Singh (7 years), was led, alongwith the Guru's mother, Gujri Devi, by their Brahmin cook and guard, Gangu, to his own ancestral village, Kheri (Near Morinda), for a safe 'refuge' or retreat. Mani Singh took charge of the 3rd group mainly comprising of Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari (wives of Guru Gobind Singh) and some other members of the Guru's household.⁴³ Mani Singh's task was, of course, ticklish. He was supposed to protect *at any cost*, the accompanying young women-folk of a 'rebel' against the government from any possible attempt of arrest or molestation from the furious marauders. It was, evidently, with great tact and care that he somehow, managed to reach Delhi safe with the group under his charge,⁴⁴ as a true bodyguard and guide.

The incident raises some important, and so far unanswered, questions of historic significance. Why and how did Mani Singh reach Delhi—the Imperial Headquarter of Aurangzeb which is alleged to be dead-set against the so called 'rebel' and 'animostic' or 'revengeful' 'trouble-shooter' Guru? It could be either in remarkable disguise, as a clever ruse or by and for some possible negotiated settlement.³⁹

Mani Singh established some contact with his Guru in his secret resort in the dense Lakhī forest of Machhiwara jungles and restored his unharmed wives to him.⁴⁵ How did it materialise? This is yet another meaningful and moot point to be meticulously studied specially in the light of guru's Epistle (*Zafarnama*) to the Emperor in the Deccan.⁴⁶ Anyway, Mani Singh's meticulous operation, in that context, speaks volumes about his sagacity, skill,

sense of commitment and standing as well as self-less devotion, courage and capacity. The incident also certifies the Guru's profound faith in him.

Perhaps, Mani Singh accompanied (or followed) the Guru to the Deccan also during his negotiational tour⁴⁷ with the new and reconciled⁴⁸ Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah⁴⁹. From there the Guru is said to have sent his wives, Sahib Kaur and Sundari, to Delhi again under the most dependable care and caution of Mani Singh⁵⁰. Perhaps Mani Singh could never meet his master physically after that.⁵¹

The sudden death, in October, 1708, of Guru Gobind Singh at Nander was bound, under the circumstances to create a creak in the Sikh Monolith even though he had already authoritatively despatched Banda Bahadur, alongwith some testifying symbols, guide lines and trusted followers,⁵¹ to North-West India. It was verily, the most critical period for the Sikh *Panth* and is a stirring story by itself.⁵²

With the excruciating martyrdom of Banda Bahadur, in 1715-16 A.D., the Sikhs, by and large, felt themselves in terrible straits and rudderless.⁵³ The new Mughal Emperor, Farrukhsiyar, ordered to annihilate them. Punjab's new governor at Lahore, Abdul Samad, swore to teach them a deterrent lesson.⁵⁴ He let loose a reign of terror and tyranny. Unfortunately, the Sikhs, themselves, had since fallen in the dismal ditch of disunity too.⁵⁵ They had broken loose into several self-confronting groups.⁵⁶ The most potent and vocal rivals were the 'Tat Khalsa' and the 'Bandeis'⁵⁷. Administratively, a virtual black out of the unbending 'Singhs' had ensued from 1716 to 1720 A.D.⁵⁸

After a due appraisal, the Delhi based⁵⁹ widow, Mata Sundari decided to assert and intervene to bridge the swallowing gap and to cement the cankering 'Panth'. As her best and hopeful choice, she picked up Mani Singh to work out and effect the much needed unity.⁶⁰

Mani Singh was an uncontroversial father-figure. He had

been close to Guru Gobind Singh and his family for about half a century. For about 35 years, he had enjoyed close proximity, intimacy and confidence of the 10th Guru whose mind and aim he knew fully well. Himself, he was without a blemish. His own family had already rendered unparalleled services and sacrifices. He was also recognised as a scholar and authority on Sikh tenets, a true sant and a valiant soldier. As a guide, organiser and leader as well as a rational, sane and sober or saintly person, he could be the most acceptable and neutral mediator at this hour of crisis.⁶¹ Mata Sundari had personal experience about his integrity and skill. The commons felt swayed when he narrated 'Kathas'.⁶²

Bhai Mani Singh reached Amritsar. He converted it into the new effective Sikh Headquarter. 'Akal Takht' became his centre of activities. Through his rejuvenating 'Kathas', and untiring tours he exposed the self-seeker's and projected the mission, or goal of the late Guru.⁶³ He also undertook the re-editing⁶⁴ of the 'Dasam Granth' into a shapely form.⁶⁵ He laboured to break its sentences and punctuated some parts to make it more intelligible to all.⁶⁶ Some fundamentalists are believed to have disapproved any interference with the originally composed holy *Granth*. They declared it as blasphemous and objectionable. His aim was to preach positively, to bring about unity and to raise no detrimental controversies.⁶⁷ He hence, preferred to forsake his academic exercise on the *Granth* and left it as intact as it was.⁶⁸

Bhai Mani Singh realised the significance of constructive literature and cultural traits in maintaining, protecting, preserving and projecting a nation. Inspite of odds and heavy schedules, he busied himself also in collecting various works, sayings and scripts of Guru Gobind Singh so that this treasure may not get lost. After a treacherous raid at Sarsa⁶⁹ and during the disturbing days, much of the Guru's literary output had been damaged, lost or had gone astray. For creating unity in Guru's name, for authentication of his measures and for benefit of posterity, it was very much required. He as an old and constant companion of the 10th Guru, was the right scholar for the job. He sent a treasure load of his

laboured collection to Mata Sundri.⁶⁸ Apart from this sent-up load he himself arranged, in proper focus, a lot of the Guru's scripts and sayings while performing his other duties as the Head-priest and *Jathedar* at the 'Akal Takht'.⁶⁹ For all this the 'Sikh Panth' has to feel indebted to Bhai Mani Singh-a multifaceted personality. Much more might have been lost for ever but for his far-sightedness and untiring labour.⁷⁰

Bhai Mani Singh was an honest hardworker as well as a hard task-master. While at Amritsar, he wrote a number of epistles⁷¹ and some creative works^{71a} too. His available writings throw ample light on his personal faculties as well as on the prevalent political and a-political factors.⁷²

Amritsar was a holy pilgrimage as well as the new Head-quarter of the Sikhs. Topographically, geographically, culturally and commercially also, it was a well-situated and densely populated central place in North India. It afforded an intentive and intensive observant, like Mani Singh, to have a meaningful peep into the political window. Perhaps, he kept Delhi-based Mata Sundari regularly apprised and well-informed about all events and matters.^{72a} With a profound insight, he played his role well and to his best capacity in the prevailing context.⁷³

To foster the needed sense of unity, co-operation and coordination in the 'Sikh Panth', Mani Singh arranged, in 1721 A.D., a purposeful meeting, at Amritsar, between the representatives of the 'Tat-Khalsa' and the 'Bandeis'.⁷⁴ A number of ticklish problems needed to be thrashed out including that of the 'Guru-Guddi' as well as a commonly acceptable 'Rehat'⁷⁵ and Mission or Goal⁷⁶ in the light of Guru Gobind Singh's injunctions.⁷⁷

Guru Gobind Singh had died in estate and suddenly in a far-flung territory in South India. Guruship could be only hereditary after a commonly believed prophetic blessing to Bibi Bhano by her own father and 3rd Guru, Amar Das. Some baffled Sikhs saw a vacuum. Some over-ambitious leaders established their own Gurudoms on the basis of their hereditary connections with one

Guru or the other. The Sikh organisation faced a quiz which had the potency to shake it if not solved satisfactorily and urgently. It was in this trying and vexing context that Bhai Mani Singh surfaced up as a mature statesman and a naive guide. He rose to the occasion with a clear-cut motive to do the necessary pruning and to delineate or project unambiguously the mission of Guru Gobind Singh and thrust unity in the 'Sikh Panth' by all means- i.e. even by resorting to force as and when the need be.⁷⁷

Bhai Mani Singh's single-mindedness, self-less pursuit and unshakable determination showed significant results after some initial obstacles and disputations which cost Mehnat Singh, the chief representative of the 'Bande'is', his life.⁷⁸ 'Tat-Khalsa' was ultimately accepted as representative of the Sikh Community. Many 'Bande'is joined its band-wagon. The Union-Ceremony was pointedly performed in a "befitting" form,⁷⁹ under the leadership of Bhai Mani Singh as *Jathedars* of the 'Akal Takht'.

The much-needed UNITY enabled the 'Khalsa Panth' to present almost a commonly accepted sketch of its own with regard to various controversial and baffling issues faced by it. It also asserted the supremacy of the 'Akal Takht' which was getting eroded or ignored at the hands of some. It was a historic achievement. It re-activised the brave Sikhs to fight zealously for the mission left by the Guru for them to complete to a logical end.⁸⁰ It re-created self-confidence amongst the fugitives, the over-cautious and the baffled. The weakening vaccum was done away to a great extent. Many of the hiding 'Singhs' re-started their sweeps. There was a positive psychic metamorphis. In the years to follow, even terrible foreign invaders, like Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmed Shah Abdali, had to confess the reckonable force and perceptible feel of the Sikhs. The Sikh hegemony of the *Mislards* and the sovereign 'Lahore Darbar' of Ranjit Singh can, perhaps, be justifiably called as the fruit of Bhai Mani Singh's purposeful endeavours. He became a primary stabilizer of the 'Panthal' and a pioneer of the 'Sikh Raj'. His elaborations on the 'Rehat' and 'Maryada' proved historic trend-setters. His 'Prem Sumarg'⁸² became a pro-

minent mile-stone.

Bhai Mani Singh vehemently pleaded that the '*Granth*' was the repository of the Guru's sacred WORD and was DIVINE and, for a true Sikh, only 'gurbani' was his/her, Guru and God. His adamant stance saved the 'Sikh Panth' from possible divisions and vivisections.

Bhai Mani Singh had no personal axe to grind. He worked honestly and diligently at Mata Sundari's bidding and behest but never detrimentally to the *Panth*. When, under some impulse or motherly emotion, she wanted to adopt, as son, a small boy, Ajit (who also looked like her martyred eldest son), Mani Singh, emphatically and argumentatively, advised against this move as a dutiful and conscientious Sikh and a deeply insighted and far-sighted statesman.^{82a}

Appropriate arrangement and management of finances was a 'must' for a sound and standable reorganisation of the unified Sikhs and to instil credibility, accountability and confidence amongst them. Bhai Mani Singh paid special and meticulous personal attention in this regard. 'Guru's Golak' was a sacred 'Community fund'. He saw to it that the expenses are incurred judiciously and that no irregularity, embezzlement or wastage occurs. The accountants and the '*granthis*' were strictly ordained by him, as *Jathedar* of 'Akal Takht', to submit proper accounts to him. He efficiently administered the "community *jagirs*". From time to time, he also apprised Mata Sundari for moral and political reason or as a measure of caution and expediency and to ensure or discharge his personal integrity and responsibility.⁸³ He preferred to be clean, firm and straight forward in all fiscal matters as well.⁸⁴

As a factual and clean guide and as 'Head Granthi', Bhai Mani Singh enjoyed an enviable reputation and respect amongst the Sikhs. For his personal traits, calibre, statesmanship, discipline and decades-long proximity to the 10th Guru,⁸⁵ his words were so weighty that the Sikh *Sangats* took him as a law-giver.⁸⁶ He was also a member of the then Presidium of 'Panj-pyaras'⁸⁷ who were

supposed to represent and declare 'Guru's' verdict when required in any typical situation. He was in perfect confidence of Mata Sundari too.⁸⁸ As an eloquent, effective and inspiring 'Katha-Vachik', he had also the knack to move mobs into action. With his unique standing and superb public relationship, he remarkably succeeded in converting holy Amritsar into the much-needed new Sikh Headquarter for due mutual consultations and coordination as the loss of Anandpur in 1704 A.D. had left the Sikhs bewildered or rootless and without a rallying centre.⁸⁹ Amritsar now became a potent proselytization centre, a focal point for "Amrit Parchar" or baptism and a congregational seat with the presence of magnetic Bhai Mani Singh at the 'Akal Takht'. His dynamic leadership and untiring zeal infused a new life in the "Khalsa-Panthis".⁹⁰

Apart from his energetic activities at the 'Akal Takht', Bhai Mani Singh even toured the neighbouring areas to preach amongst the commons and to be accessible to a large number.⁹¹ His stress at the observance of 'Rehat' and 'Maryada', touching references and reminders about Guru Gobind Singh's Mission and the task ahead rejuvenated the 'Singhs' and raised noticeable 'crops' of neo-sikhs.⁹² On the concrete base of his own clean life and family record of unique sacrifices and steadfast devotion, he became the needed embodiment for the re-organised 'Khalsa' and a symbol of the 'Panthal'.⁹³

Bhai Mani Singh's acceptable leadership, at a crucial stage, again made the 'Singhs' fearless and formidable challengers to tyranny.⁹⁴ They re-adopted 'gorilla' (guerrilla) tactics to teach a lesson to the autocratic aggressors and their tormentors. He is believed to have even prophesised and advocated an independent or quasi-independent set-up as a remedial measure against the prevailing obigarchy and consequential anarchy.⁹⁵ Dreams of sovereignty of sikhs got due fillip.^{95a}

Bhai Mani Singh is said to have composed, at 'Akal Takht' his classics, *Bhagat Ratnavli* and *Gyan Ratnavli*, and some other inspiring pieces as well during this very period. He, thus, dispensed

an amalgam of *Gyan* (knowledge), *Karam* (action and *Ehagi* (devotion) as the needed anti-biotic to the social, cultural and political malaise and to integrate the Sikhs into fearless freedom-fighters, righteous crusaders, spiritual saints-c-soldiers and knowledgeable humanists as per guidelines and demarcations set forth by the preceding heroes and the great Gurus.

It is historically meaningful to note that Bhai Mani Singh was doing his open '*parchar*' through his congregational *Kathas*, touring lectures and writings without serious restraints and bans in the region so close to Lahore, the provincial headquarter and administrative centre of the Imperial Government which was declaredly anti-Sikh and deterrently punitive. He was also carrying on an uncensored communication with Mata Sundari (who, herself, was stationed at the Imperial Headquarter).

It appears that Bhai Mani Singh was looked upon mainly as a harmless saint and a peaceful preacher. He appears to have a good number of admirers amongst the non-Sikhs too⁹⁶ and, perhaps, enjoyed a reasonable shelter and patronage as a learned reformer. In the face of stringent administrative orders against the troublesome Sikhs and announced rewards on their heads, free movements and preachings by Bhai Mani Singh become intriguing and quizzical.^{96b} Several theorems can be advanced in this respect.

Bhai Mani Singh was, perhaps, quite thoughtful and calculating. He appears to have played safe in wider interest. He was quite astute, strategic and expedient to maintain a good rapport with the government to mark his time.

A perusal of Bhai Mani Singh's available work indicates that he aimed to re-organise and unify the sikhs on one platform without openly and antagonistically stirring or provoking the administration.⁹⁷ As a spiritual man, he raised his voice, in general, against tyranny of all type without specifically naming any tyrant individual or territorial regime. He was ultra cautious as not to raise his voice vociferously and openly against the Imperial or Regional Government or against any religion, sect, group or

officer. If he were to speak a word against the Mughal Empire or against the muslims or the officials, he could not have survived or preached in Amritsar and roundabout even for a day.

An objective re-appraisal of Mani Singh's span of activities conform that, inspite of punitive measures against the incalcitrant Sikhs, the administration looked upon Bhai Mani Singh (regardless of his family record and biodata) as essentially a harmless, inagressive, unprovoking and popular saint and a father-figure involved in academic and philosophic exercises.⁹⁸ As such it, initially felt no need to arrest him or to stop his activities.⁹⁹

Bhai Mani Singh's prior strategy was to *tacfully* reawaken and revitaminise the baffled Sikhs by raising their drooping spirits and hopes, boosting their morale, cementing their faith and self-confidence and fostering a sense of brotherhood, unity and fearlessness so that the devouring vacuum, created with the death of Guru Gobind Singh (1708 A.D.) as well as due to infightings and awful execution of Banda Bahadur (1715 A.D.), should become less telling. Setting own house in order was the necessary pre-requisite in his eyes. Sagaciously, he himself, did not challenge the Imperial, Provincial or Local Administrators nor did he defy them or flout or object to any State Order or Ordinance.

Till 1734 A.D. (?), Bhai Mani Singh busied himself in positive dynamism or activism in his own typical style and with a specific camouflaged purpose and methodology. His mode had been showing some encouraging sprouts from time to time. It did serve as an acid test on occasions. Some re-instilled and determined Sikhs did successfully swoop upon the mughal patrol parties again in a seek-hit-hide strategy. In 1724 A.D., a powerful punitive expedition, led by Islam Khan, was badly mauled and humiliatingly repulsed by them with perceptible losses to it.

In 1726, Zakaria Khan, the new Governor of Punjab (Lahore), administratively felt forced to crush the troublesome Sikh swoopers by all possible means and tortures.¹⁰⁰ He announced luring rewards for their arrests and heads.¹⁰¹

Persecution, stimulates that which it intends to crush. The Sikhs violently reacted and retaliated befittingly as and when possible. They became relentless. To keep themselves safe from their intentive captors and tormenters, they had to forgo their participation at the religious congregations and *Gur-purabs*. They felt deprived of any reasonable civic liberty^{101a} since it was, now, a game of hit or die.

Zakaria's unending aweful measures prompted some grave posers before Bhai Mani Singh as Chief Priest at the 'Akal Takht'. The undiminishing thrust by the resourceful governor and the limitations of the Sikhs subjected to acute privations and perils could naturally result in their rapid depletion and annihilation. The stoppage of the flow of Sikh followers to attend even the significant *Gur-purabs* also told heavily on the income through offerings when funds and provisions or victuals were badly needed to keep up the show as well as the Sikh Organisation. The resultant situation could again prove, sooner or later, as puncturing and demoralising.

Bhai Mani Singh felt deeply concerned. Zakaria too thought of some effective ruse to rout the Sikhs who, by their 'gorilla' raids, had already lengthened the campaigns against them resulting in a rapid loss of his personal prestige and image as well as of administrative material, resources and revenues.¹⁰² Time was now ripe for some other game on the chess-board of politics in this troubled region.¹⁰³

Delay in substantial results could expose Zakaria Khan. It could work in his recall or fall or some political tumble. He, somehow, won over Subeg Singh and Surat Singh—two astute Sikhs. By some 'solemn' assurances or allurements to them, he succeeded in striking a 'gentleman's agreement' with a very powerful recalcitrant Sikh leader, Kapur Singh, who was honoured by him with the high sounding title of 'Nawab', a *Khilat* (robe) and a *jagir* worth one lac rupees per year.¹⁰⁴

Zakaria Khan, perhaps, felt that his treatment with Kapur Singh would either rope in many more Sikh leaders or would

engineer an acute disunity and internal strife amongst them. That would, he thought, facilitate his job, help him to re-establish and ensure peace in the disturbed region or to break down the unrelenting ones with some Sikh support and 'guidance' or 'insight' procured as such. He appears to have conjectured that, with his ruse, he would either render the valiant Sikh peasantry and soldiery impotent or enable a bulk of tired Sikhs revert to a peaceful existence as subservients or would feel capable enough to cut them to size.¹⁰⁵

Zakaria's calculations were falsified to his chagrin. Even after getting 'honoured' or 'recognised', Kapur Singh did not sell himself. Rather the Sikhs felt psychologically lifted and strengthened. The agreement was taken as their 'victory' or reward for their valiance as well as a sign of administrative weakness, inefficiency, failure and doon.¹⁰⁶ A new hope and spirit kindled them. They felt coaxed to assert a bit more to snatch full liberty.¹⁰⁷ They smarted to give a more hitting blow to get more ground and gains. The tussle continued with rather greater momentum. Action and reaction played a sea-saw game. Both sides had to bear huge sacrifices and sacrileges. Blood flowed in streams.

Zakria ultimately, sent in 1735 A.D. a powerful army to cow down or to flatten the Sikhs. Kapur Singh's newly bestowed upon *jagir* was forcibly snatched back. The Sikhs, in general, bothered little about a *jagir* or 'nawabi'. For them, time had come for a 'do or die' stage. They reorganised and re-trimmed their 'Budha Dal' and 'Tarun Dal'

In 1736 A.D., Kapur Singh and his followers dexterously and with remarkable unison made a surprise eagle-like swoop upon Samad Khan's powerful contingent at Hujra Shah. They mauled and routed it badly and decamped causing colossal losses to it.¹⁰⁸

Inspite of their dare-devil swoops, effective raids, unmatched grit and skill, fearlessness and fortitude, the Sikhs-in-hiding felt acutely handicapped and hard-pressed. Blockades, paucity of rations, lack of mutual liaisons, communications and consultations,

prying eyes of the fretting, revengeful and, now, more vigilant administration hampered the scattered Sikhs. A congregational meet for consultation and coordination or to work out a common 'declared' goal and strategy became imperative. A commonly accepted and judicious leadership was immediately needed for planning and for a unified action and, for that, an urgent but safe congregation became a "must".

As an intense observer and *Jathedar* of 'Akal Takht', Bhai Mani Singh felt urged to bring, somehow, the scattered and uncorded Sikhs in tune or on one platform for demarcating their goal and action-plan as well as to keep them motivated, boosted and unified or in due cohesion for the *Common Cause*.

After some pondering, Bhai Mani Singh worked out a scheme in 1736 A.D. As "Singh Saheb" of 'Akal Takht', he decided to arrange a huge congregation of the Sikhs at Amritsar to serve as a 'Sarbat Khalsa' for a common 'Mata' (Resolution). Without prior permission or approval from the administrative authorities, such a congregation was impossible, unthinkable and inadvisable under the circumstances.

Bhai Mani Singh himself was not a *persona-non-grata*. He enjoyed a good personal standing, as Head-priest, amongst the Sikhs on one side and as a harmless saint-academician in the eyes of the administration.

Using his good offices, Bhai Mani Singh, somehow, managed to procure the needed "ijazat-nama" (Administrative permission) to hold a massive Sikh Congregation at Amritsar by assuring to pay as fee, Rs. 10,000/- to the Government, from the expected offerings at the planned 'Samagam'.

Zakaria, perhaps, tried to be cunning. He thought of grabbing the offered money or even the cumulative collection and to out-smart Bhai Mani Singh as well as to hit hard the troublesome Sikhs, as a god-sent lot, by a deceitful swoop on the proposed unsuspecting gathering. He, however, misfired.

The gathered Sikhs were on caution and quite alert. Some had smelled a rat. An utter confusion prevailed when Zakaria's men suddenly raided the yet-gathering 'Sangat'. Zakaria's scheme failed. A number of his raiding men lost their lives at the hands of the desperately escaping Sikhs.

Bhai Mani Singh refused to pay off the agreed sum on the plea that expected offerings could not pour in due to the melee caused by Zakaria's hasty and fraudulent action.

With his own net-work of intelligence and for through some well-meaning Muslim friends and admirers, Mani Singh had, perhaps, come to know in time about Zakaria's ruse. Possibly, a timely warning to the 'Sangat' had enabled the Sikhs to flee off before the swoop.

Zakaria lost much-needed^{108a} money as well as men. He made a mockery of himself before his superiors, rivals and the commons. He frowned and fretted.

The frothful and raging Zakaria procured a *fatawa* (decree) from a *Qazi* (as per prevalent criminal law) and got Bhai Mani Singh and his companion, Dewan Singh, arrested. As punishment, they were to either accept Islam and to denounce Sikhism or were to be pincered into pieces.

Bhai Mani Singh had been charged of breach of faith and of being a behind-the-scene party in the turmoil created by the Sikhs¹⁰⁹. As per some accounts, he was hauled up also for an alleged blasphemy or for mischievously and unauthorisedly rearranging the 'Adi Granth' or the 'Guru Granth' which tantamounted to a grave religious crime and a punishable attempt at sacrilege and to mislead.¹¹⁰

Zakaria hoped to puncture and punish the Sikhs by eliciting helpful information from a tortured Bhai Mani Singh about their hideouts, resources and plans.¹¹¹ Perhaps, he also presumed that the conversion to Islam of the *Jathedar* of 'Akal Takht' would demoralise the whole 'Panthal' or his death would serve as a useful deterrent.¹¹²

Heroically, Bhai Mani Singh belied Zakaria's hopes. He was all smiles when he was finally cut piece-meal on June 24, 1737 (or 1738 ?) A.D. He had steadfastly refused to get converted under force or to divulge anything. Till his last breath, he is said to have conversed, with full calm, with his mystified executioners and finally gave up with 'Wah-Guru, Wah-Guru' on his lips.¹¹³

It is traditionally believed that Bhai Mani Singh (aged 91 ?)¹¹⁴ was presented in chains, alongwith his two sons and some other captured companions, in Zakaria's Court. Defying court-ettiquettes, they raised incessant *jaikars* (slogans) of 'Wah-Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wah-Guru ji ki Fateh'.

Inspite of an option, Bhai Mani Singh chose to get his physical body cut into pieces. He saved his own soul and also saved the 'Khalsa' from being turn to pieces by the foul Administration. His multi-hued contributions and stirring sacrifices became historically significant in many ways.¹¹⁵

Bhai Mani Singh's life-account, if scanned in right context and perspective, would undoubtedly show that he was a rare *PARADIGM* of greatness, goodness and godliness, of spiritual, socialism and heroism, of self-surrender and self-sacrifice, of sainthood, scholarship and swords-men-ship, of hereditary traditions and laudable traits of culture-in-totality.

Bhai Mani Singh was an authentic and authorised law-pronouncer in the pulpit, a virtuous householder, a valorous champion, a scholar-in-depth, a mesmerising narrator and reciter, an adept leader and expert organiser, an astute guide and calculating statesman, a "SANT-SIPAHI" in the "Khalsa Brotherhood", a unique and the first *Jathedar* for his co-believers, an unmatchable martyr with distinguished fortitude, a true "YOGI" in life and a colourful personality with a fund of history in his credit-sheet.

NOTES

1) Also see Ibn Taus, Article : "The martyr" (in serial), *Tehran Times*, 28-29th July, 1982, p. 3.

2) Dr. Trilochan Singh published an un-researched Article : "Bhai Mani Singh—The Saint Martyr" in the English Quarterly : *The Missionary* (Delhi, 06), July—Sept., 1961. N.D. Ahuja also published an Article 'Sant Sipahi Bhai Mani Singh' in *Passion*, June, 1966, pp. 17-20. He subsequently wrote a research work, *Scholar Shahid-Bhai Mani Singh*, too.

3, 4) Tagore published, about the Sikhs, 5 poems (June, 1888-Oct., 1899) *i.e.* 3 on Guru Gobind Singh, 2 on Banda Bahadur's and Taru Singh's martyrdom ("Prarthana tita Dan"—a ballad) apart from *Beer Guru* (1885) and his first 3 serialised short Articles (*Balak* of July-Aug. and Oct.-Dec., 1885 ; *Manashi*, June, 1888) and two devotional songs.

For these and some other martyrs of the period, See Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Sikh Martyrs*.

4a) These works, prevalent tradition and auxiliary sources have been used with due caution to scribe this paper.

5) Several Mohiyals claim martyr Mani Singh, Mati Das, Sati Das, Dayal Das (of some family lineage) as chibbers (Mohiyal Brahmins). They link them dynastically with Rishi Bherigo, Bhagwan Parshu Ram, Rishi Bhardwaj, Guru Daronacharya, Ashothama, "Hussaini Brahmins", "Rahibi Dattas", Raja Dahir, Praga ji Karyala, Satya Sen, etc. as well as with Bhai Gurbaksh Singh of 'Hari Mandir' fame, Bhai Bal Mukund, Bhai Parmanand, Bhai Sunder Singh and a number of Awards winning high generals and officers of the Army.

For details, see N.D. Ahuja, *Op. Cit.* Also see Note 20 below.

6) Trilochan Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

As per other prevalent (traditional) belief, Bhai Mani Singh was not from Kebowal but from Longowal (Sangrur District) where a commemorative Gurdwara, in his name, still stands. It used to be under the charge of late Sant Harcharan Singh Longowal (the erstwhile assassinated President of Akali Dal, Punjab and co-author of Rajiv-Longowal Accord of 1986). May be, Longowal became a subsequent abode or centre of activities and associated with Mani Singh. No *authentic evidence* is, however, forthcoming. Also see Gurtej Singh's Article, "What Bhindrawale Stands For," *Illustrated Weekly (Bombay)*, April 10, 1983 (Special Baisakhi Number) p. 13.

7) As per *Bhat Vahi Tulada* (referred Sewa Singh, *Shaheed Bilcs*, p. 5—Edt., Giani Girja Singh, Ludhiana), Balu Ram lost his life while fighting heroically against famous Mughal *Faujdar*, Murtaza Khan. Evidently, there is some historical confusion, about the said Mughal *Faujdar* since the famous 'Murtaza Khan' (Farid Bukhari—a *Mujaddidi*)—vanquisher of rebel prince, Khusrou, and captor of Guru Arjun Dev and, later, Governor of Lahore had already died in 1617 A.D. in Jehangir's time and was not alive in 1634 (when Shah Jehan was ruling). No other "Murtaza Khan," as a famous *Faujdar*, is listed in available records and annals. Either the name/title have been confused and misquoted or some non-conspicuous soldier named Murtaza was involved. For further logical reasoning or details, see Ahuja, *Op. cit.*

8) Trilochan Singh, *Ibid.*

Kiratpur had become the Sikh Headquarter since 1634-5. Cf. Giani Bhai Gyan Singh, *Panth Prakash*, p. 119 and also Max Arthur Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, IV, p. 213.

9-10) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

According to some weighty but variant traditions, Bhai Mani Singh was born in 1665 A.D. i.e. after the deaths of Gurus Har Rai (d. 1661) and Har Krishan (d. 1664). Also see Notes 15-16 *infra*.

11) Kesar Singh Chhiber (*Bansawli Nama*), Santokh Singh (*Suraj Prakash*), Gyani Bhai Gyan Singh (*Op. cit.*), etc., have quoted variant dates about the Guru's re-arrival at Anandpur.

Trilochan Singh (*Guru Tegh Bahadur*) quotes 1671 as correct and Sewa Singh (*Op. cit.*) cites 1672.

12) Cf. Archer, *The Sikhs*, pp 182-83.

13) There is controversy about Guru Gobind Singh's date of birth too. Also see Trilochan Singh's Article, *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

14) Variant dates are cited about the arrival at Anandpur of the left-over family of the 9th Guru.

15-16) According to some traditions, Bhai Mani Singh was, then, of 13 years (Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 55). As such, he was born in 1644 and not in 1665 A.D. Perhaps, inaccurate calendrical conversions have caused these confusions. Also see Notes 9, 10 *supra*.

17-19) For detailed discussion, see N.D. Ahuja, *Anandpur-Bliss, B'ast and The Breeze, and Creation of The Khalsa*.

20) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

Lakhi Rai is generally believed to be a *Mazhabi* Sikh and a renegade. Mohiyal Brahmin Mani's said engagement (if really so) might have been, possibly, arranged at the behest of the Guru and is worth a significant notice or is just a concocted tale (since the casteless *Khalsa* had not been born as yet even though Nanakism or Sikhism was averse to caste considerations).

Some Mohiyals do not accept Mani Singh as a Mohiyal or as related, in any way, with the notable martyred Mohiyal brothers etc. (See Note 5 *supra*).

21-23) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, Appendix 5, pp. 105-06 and Notes 5, 20 *supra*.

24) Variant dates have been quoted (without authority). Sewa Singh (*Op. cit.*, pp. 40-42, 92), *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*, Koer Singh, etc. support 1734 A.D. Rattan Singh Bhangu (*Prachin*

Panth Prakash) quotes 1738 A.D. G.S. Chhabra (*Advanced History of the Punjab*, I, p. 363, Hind. Edi. 1968) states 1737 (without advancing any authority).

25) See Notes 15, 16 above.

26) Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 41. Also see *Bhat Vahi*, *Op. cit.* and Ahuja *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*).

27) See N.D. Ahuja, *Tyag Se Tahwar Tak (Vir Banda Bahadur)* and also *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*).

28-31) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 62; Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 581.

32) C.H. Payne (*A Short History of The Sikhs*, Appendix E, p. 237) conjectures that this 3rd edition of the *Adi Granth* got lost during the following days of anarchy or was, later on, taken away, as a part of booty by Ahmed Shah Abdali.

33) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 60, 61, 69, 71, 81; Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 285-86

34-35) Cf. Trilochan Singh, Article, *Op. cit.*, p. 17

36) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 25, 45, 66 (and also *Desu Bhat Vahi*).

37) *Ibid.*, pp. 75-77; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 169.

38) For more details, see Ahuja, *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*)

39) Khem Chand, *Ponda Vahi* (Hardwar)-quoted Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 26

40) The exact date and day of that *Baisakhi* are debatable. For discussion, see Ahuja, *Anandpur And Creation of The Khalsa* (*Op. cit.*)

41) Ahuja, *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*)

42) Cf. Trilochan Singh, Article, *Op. cit.*, p. 17; Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 67; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 45

43) Ahuja, *Anandpur.....(Op. cit.)*

44) Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 281; Ujjagar Singh, *Khalsa ji de Panj Heere* (Pbi., Amritsar, 1962), pp. 178-79; Trilochan Singh,

Article: "History of the Compilation of the Dasam Granth," *The Sikh Review* (Calcutta), April, 1955, p. 56.

45) Trilochan Singh, Article, *Op. cit.* (*The Missionary*, Delhi), p. 17.

46-48) For further discussion on the point, on the Guru's blessings or help, at Jaiju, to Muazim (New Emperor) and his negotiations with him, etc., see N.D. Ahuja, (i) *Anandpur*.....and *Mani Singh* (*Op. cit.*); (ii) *Qadir-ul-Kalam - Munsni Ncnd Lal Goya* and also *Hukamnama* (Dhol, Patiala) of October, 1707 A.D.

49-50) Cf. Trilochan Singh, Art., *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

21-60) For details, see Ahuja, *Tyag Se Talwar Tak* (*Op. cit.*); Khafi Khan, *Muntakhal-u'l-Lubab*, Ed., Elliot Dowson, VII, pp. 457; Forster, I, pp 312-13; Ghulam Hussain *Siyar-ul Mutakhrin*, p. 119; Mohd. Qasim, *Ibrat Nama*; Mohd. Latif, *History of the Punjab*; Hari Ram Gupta, *A History of The Sikhs*; etc., etc.

61) It is worth notice that a powerful section of the Sodhi *Masands*, in occupation of Sri Hari Mandir at Amritsar, had not permitted Guru Tegh Bahadur to even enter into the complex and had also threatened his life. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh had forcibly evicted them. He had, then, deputed Mani Singh to take over the charge there. The pleased Guru bestowed upon him a Commendation Certificate in Samvat 1760 B. Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 71-77.

62) For Mani Singh's activities, also see his own *Gur Bilas Patshahi* (Pbi. Lahore), pp. 6, 76, 128, 280, 288 and *Pothi Janam Sakhi*, pp. 40, 185, 275. Cf. Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 416-17 also.

62a) Cf. Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 285-86 and Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.* pp. 60-81, etc.

63-69) Cf. Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*. Preface (*Mukh-band*), p. 11; Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 286; Randhir Singh, *Shabad Murat* (Pbi., Amritsar, 1962), p. 43; Trilochan Singh, Art., *Op. cit.* (*Sikh Review*, April, 1955), p. 58.

According to some Sikh traditions, this work was first started by Mani Singh himself (as explanatory and not as re-edited). Cf. Chhiber, *Op. cit.*

70) Also see Ahuja, *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*).

71-73) See Appendix for a specimen letter of Baisakh 22 (1715 A.D.), to Mata Sundari, written with caution after Banda's escape or arrest (?). *For a safe or secret communication* (perhaps), he suggested, in the note, its reply be sent in a bamboo piece. Some Sikh scholars have challenged its authenticity and genuineness. Cf. Rattan Singh Jeggi, *Dasam Granth Da Karitaroo* (N. Delhi, 1966). Anyway, Mani Singh's regular communication, from Amritsar, with Delhi-based Mata Sundari is, generally, an accepted theorem amongst the Sikhs (by and large).

74) Cf. Ahuja, *Tyag Se Talwar Tak* (*Op. cit.*); Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*, Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* (Amritsar, 1935); Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Op. cit.*, etc.

75-81) Cf. Sainapat, *Guru Sobha* (Pbi. Patiala 1967), pp. 33, 129; Jagtar Singh Grewal, Article : "An Early Interpretation of Guru Gobind Singh's Mission" in *The Tenth Master* (Chandigarh), pp. 115-17; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 169-222. Mani Singh, *Gur Bilas Patshahi*, pp. 6, 77, 83, 95, 120, 125, 128, 134, 139, 149, 280, 288, etc., *Sikhan Di Bhagtauli* (Pbi. Amritsar, 1955), p. 9, Pothi Janam Sakhi, p. 591; Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 75-77; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 111-116; *Hukam Nama* (Dhol), *Op. cit.*, Ahuja, Anandpur.....(*Op. cit.*), Mani Singh (*Op. cit.*), etc., etc.

82) Regarding Prem Sumarg's nature, scope and significance, also see Ahuja, *Op. cit.* (*Anandpur....., Creation of the Khalsa*).

82a) It is said that inspite of adverse opinion of Bhai Mani Singh and some other well-wishers, Mata Sundari, out of womanly emotion or some other consideration, adopted one child, Ajit Singh, who very much resembled, in looks, her martyred eldest son and even finalised his marriage. Later, disgusted with his improper conduct, she publically disowned him. Had this spoiled child or

any other individual claimed, and succeeded to, "Guru Gaddi" in place of the universally accepted holy "Guru Granth Saheb", the Sikhs might have lost a sanctified rallying focal and their whole subsequent history of heroism and the position of the *Panth* would have been adversely affected.

83-90) Cf. Ranbir Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 43; Ganda Singh, *Hukam Name*, 206; Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 65-90; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 145, 177, 187-88, 222, 416-17; Mani Singh *Gur Bilas Patshahi*, 6, 76, 95, 128, 280, 288, 525-35, *Sikhan Di Bhagatavli*, p. 9, *Pothi Janam Sakhi*, pp. 40, 185, 275, 591; Trilochan Singh, Art., *Op. cit. (Sikh Review)* p. 56; Gyan Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 460, 579.

91-92) Cf. Mani Singh, *Gur Bilas Patshahi*, p. 535; Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 73; Trilochan Singh, *Ibid.*

Some people strongly feel that the "Damdami Taksal" at Chowk Mehta (Near Amritsar) was also first set up by Mani Singh. The place became specially well-known when Sant Kartar Singh Bhindranwale and his successor, Sant Jarnail Singh, preached from there. Presently, its acting chief, Baba Thakur Singh, is very much in news with regard to the 'Kar Sewa' at the 'Akal Takht' and in various unity moves. It has been the centre of the *Akhand Kirtani Jatha* too. Also see Gurtej Singh, Art., *Op. cit. (Illustrated Weekly)*, p. 13.

93) Also see Ahuja, *Op. cit. (Mani Singh)* and Note *supra*.

94-95) The subsequent convulsive political events in Persia (Iran), Afghanistan, North-West India (specially invasions by Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah, establishment of *Misls* and role of the Sikhs, Ranjit Singh's Sovereign "Raj Khalsa Jeo" or "Lahore Darbar" and the inroads by the Britishers, etc.) are explicit historical certificates in this respect.

95a) Chaotic administrative and political situation prompted a number of Sikhs to cherish dreams of their own Sovereign fiefs. Their plannings and activities consequentially invited an awful wrath of the Government. See Lepel Griffin, *Raja's of the*

Punjab (Lahore, 1870), p. 18; *Panth Prakash*, p. 506; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 203; Hari Ram, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 7-8, 12; and various other authorities quoted in Notes 102-104 below.

96) Ever since Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana till at least 1947 A.D., a number of Muslim *mirsasis*, *rababis* and *bhats* were active participants in the Sikh *Sankirtans* and *Sammelans* (Congregations). As such, it can be safely asserted that a good number of Muslims must have attended Mani Singh's Congregations as well.

97) Presence of several Muslim employees and soldiers under the Guru's (from time to time), Guru Gobind Singh's tilt to Muazzim (Bahadur Shah-I)'s struggle for succession (Jaiju Battle, October, 1707), Guru's open confederate and devotee, Nand Lal 'Goya', being a very high official with the Mughal Administration point out that the Gurus were only against tyranny but not against Islam, the Muslims or even the Mughal Rule (*blessed by Guru Nanak, as per Sikh tradition*) on the basis of any label.

98-99) It is worth note that even during the stringent measures against Banda Bahadur or the recalcitrant and troublesome Sikhs or frequent frictions and encounters, the Administration neither hauled up Mani Singh nor banned his proselytising activities and congregations. During this very period, a number of Gurudwaras came up in Dhakka and its neighbourhood or at other places. It appears that the Administration was zealous to nip the political ambitions of brave Sikhs and to maintain law and order but was not very particular to curb peaceful religious preachings, etc.

100) To understand perspective, the strict measures against the Sikhs in Punjab, one must also study objectively the over-all political and administrative conditions with special reference to the dangers from Afghanistan, rise of the Marahattas, prevalent centrifugalism, appearance of European and other foreign powers and the incessant political sea-saw game and warfare, etc.

101) The prison-well, outside 'Delhi Gate' of Lahore in which the severed heads and corpses of the captured and decapitated Sikhs were thrown and stuffed came to be known as "Shaheed Ganj." For details, see Ganda Singh, *History of the Gurdwara Shahid Ganj (Lahore)*

101a) See Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 278.

102-104) Regarding Kapur Singh—Zakaria Khan relations etc., see also, Prem Singh Hoti, *Nawab Kapur Singh*; H.T. Princep *Origin of the Sikh Power*; Col. Pollier, *A Report on the Sikhs*; J.D. Cunningham, *Op. cit.*, W.L.M. Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, N.K. Sinha, *Rise of Sikh Power*; Chhabra, *Op. cit.*, pp. 356-59; Ahuja, *Op. cit.* (*Mani Singh*), etc.

105-107) This *Jagir* and title did create a crevice or rift amongst the Sikhs. Many favoured snatching bravely the power. They disapproved bestowed strategic allurements which tantamounted, in colour and odour, to cowardly subjugation and slavery. Some took these favours as a helpful booster or ladder to the ultimate goal. See Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

108) Cf. Gyani Gyan Singh, *Shamsher Khalsa* (1913), II, p. 218; *Panth Prakash*, *Op. cit.* p. 576; Gokul Chand, *Op. cit.*, pp. 196, 207; etc.

108a) Cf. Hari Ram Gupta, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 16.

109) Cf. Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 223.

110) Cf. Chhiber, *Op. cit.*, Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 11; Bhangu, *Op. cit.*, p. 223; Gokul Chand, *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

111-113) Sewa Singh, *Op. cit.*, pp. 41, 91 and *Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi*

114) See Note 24 above.

115) There were also a good number of Hindus and *Nanakpanthis* (Sikhs) in employment under Zakaria Khan. He was said to be, generally, believer of religious freedom or tolerance and was

pcular even though he had to effect deterrent measures under his administrative and political compulsions. See *Panth Prakash*, p. 4:8; Hari Ram Gupta, *Studies in Later Mughal History of the Punjab* (Lahore, 1944), pp. 54-55 and also *A History of the Sikhs* (1952), p. 17; B N. Goswami and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jagis of Jakhbar* (Simla, 1967), pp. 175-76.

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